

Yankees first baseman trades baseball uniform for Thunderbirds flight suit

By Senior Airman Jerron Barnett
Air Mobility Command Public Affairs

MACDILL AIR FORCE BASE, Fla. (AFPN) – Tino Martinez, Baseball’s New York Yankees first baseman, got the once-in-a-lifetime chance Jan. 23 – to fly with the U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds. It was a chance he had dreamed as a child.

“I’ve been really excited about it ever since (Brig. Gen. Chip Diehl, 6th Air Mobility Wing commander) called me about it a couple days ago,” Martinez said before his pre-flight training. “I’ve seen the planes in Seattle air shows a couple of times. I used to live close to this area when I was growing up, and I would always see the planes practice a lot. It’s awesome to watch.”

The Thunderbirds were here to support Super Bowl XXXV. They performed aerial maneuvers right before kickoff. While they were in town, the pilots also gave some of the local celebrities, like Martinez, orientation flights.

Before Martinez or any other passengers got into the cockpit of the Thunderbirds’ F-16 Fighting Falcons, a series of exams and safety briefings were given to passengers before flying.

These procedures ensured passengers were medically safe to fly and understood their duties in case of an emergency.



Photo by Senior Airman Jerron Barnett, AMCIPA

Tino Martinez, Baseball’s New York Yankees’ first baseman, gets some last minute instructions from Maj. Scott Bowen, U.S. Air Force Thunderbird slot pilot, before takeoff. Martinez was one of many sports celebrities receiving orientation flights from the Thunderbirds before Superbowl XXXV.

“The briefings were a lot of information, but I need to know that stuff,” Martinez said. “It’s a little intimidating, but I’m ready.”

After the exams, briefings, fitting of the G-suit and helmet, Maj. Scott Bowen, Thunderbird slot pilot, gave Martinez an overall look at the flight.

“Basically, we will go out...and perform our aerial maneuvers like barrel rolls, loops and vertical climbs,” Bowen said. “We will probably get up to about

500 miles per hour during the trip and come back.”

After a goodbye kiss from his wife, Marie, and their three children, Martinez and Bowen were ‘off to the wild blue yonder.’

After the flight, Martinez was thrilled with his experience. “I got to fly the plane for a short time and then we did some loops and turns,” Martinez said. “Sign me into the Air Force, that was awesome.”

‘Air Force Experience’ present during Super Bowl

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MACDILL AIR FORCE BASE, Fla. (AFPN) – The Air Force’s traveling recruiting tool, known as the Air Force Experience, brought its show to Tampa, Fla., as one of the numerous events the base used to support the Air Force’s retention and recruiting efforts during Super Bowl XXXV.

The Air Force Experience is a high-tech, interactive attraction designed to showcase career opportunities and help reconnect the Air Force with the American public. This one-of-a-kind road show tours the country complete with an F-16 Fighting Falcon jet known as Falcon 1, bold video presentations, computer kiosks and a fleet of customized flight simulators designed to let visitors take a high-speed “virtual” mission.

This educational and entertainment experience offers excitement and a bit of an edge in a style especially designed to ignite the interests of young children and adults.

“The children love the plane,” said Chief Master Sgt. Leo Abate, maintenance chief for the F-16.

“The first time we set the plane up in a mall, all the children asked me how we flew it in there. When I told them it was rolled in the mall off a truck, they thought it was just a model. I told them this was an operational aircraft at one time and it was the first F-16 delivered to the Air Force in 1978. There’s a lot of history in this plane.”

“The display aircraft allows people to get close to the aircraft, and the simulators give them a feel of how it is to fly one,” said retired Senior Master Sgt. Jim Renshaw, an F-16 technician. “The kids get real excited about it.”

Kunsan Basketball Standings



National League

Teams	W	L
35 FS	6	1
AMMO	4	1
FIREDAWGS	3	3
MSS	4	2
CS	2	3
TRANS	2	3
OSS	1	4
80 FS	0	5

American League

Teams	W	L
SFS	6	1
MXS	6	2
MDG	3	3
ARMY	3	2
SUPS	3	4
SVS	1	5
CES	1	6

Game Results

Jan. 31

ARMY def. SVS 60-34
SFS def. CES 40-35
MXS def. SUPS 72-58

Jan. 30

MSS def. FIREDAWGS 61-53
CS def. 80FS 36-35

Jan. 29

SUPS def. CES 52-44
SFS def. MDG 59-41
ARMY def. MDG 54-48

Jan. 18

CS def. FIREDAWGS 66-54
AMMO def. 35FS by forfeit
TRANS def. 80FS 46-40

Jan. 10

SFS def. SUPS 52-35
ARMY def. CES 44-39
MXS def. SVS 47-41

Jan. 9

Fire Dept. def. TRANS 53-42
35 FS def. MSS 58-51

Jan. 8

MXS def. CES 43-42
SFS def. SVS 47-32
ARMY def. MDG 54-48

Jan. 4

AMMO def. TRANS 52-30
35 FS def. OSS 56-46
MSS def. CS 51-50

Jan. 3

SUPS def. SVS 55-47
MXS def. MDG 57-45
SFS def. ARMY 53-52

Jan. 2

35 FS def. CS by forfeit
Fire Dept. def. OSS 71-41
MSS def. 80 FS by forfeit

Dec. 21

AMMO def. OSS 56-38

Dec. 20

MDG def. CES 55-53
ARMY def. SUPS 62-41
SFS def. MXS 54-44

Dec. 19

CS def. TRANS 76-48
MSS def. OSS 30-28
35 FS def. Fire Dept. 63-41

Dec. 18

SFS def. CES 73-65
MXS def. SUPS 54-50

Sports Briefs

Presidents Day Run

The sports and fitness center sponsors a Presidents Day 5-km run Feb. 17 at 8 a.m. at the track. Sign up until the day of the race.

Yoga fit

The sports and fitness center offers a yoga fit class Wednesdays and Fridays from noon to 1 p.m.
For more information call 782-4026.

Tai Chi

The sports and fitness center offers a Tai Chi class on Saturdays from 3:30 to 5 p.m.

For more information call 782-4026.

3-on-3 tournament

There will be a 3-on-3 basketball tournament Feb. 17 at 3 p.m. at the sports and fitness center. Teams need to be signed up by Feb. 16.

Bench press competition

A bench press competition will be held at the sports and fitness center Feb. 17 at 10 a.m.
Volunteers are also needed to spot and judge competitors.
For more information call 782-4026.